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and the affectionate embraces of dear relatives. Here it was that he parted with his fond mother, who, like all his fascinating illusions, is now no more.

His limbs totter, and yet he hastens on to keep up with the two young guides who go before him. They are his sister's children, who have come out to meet him. The eldest has, with some difficulty, prevailed upon him to let her carry his luggage, and he has scarcely been able to refuse the youngest his gun. They both knew him at once; his uniform was familiar to them; they even knew the number of his regiment. As the girl looks round at him, he is forcibly reminded of her mother, whom he has not seen for years, but to whom he is strongly attached. A thousand emotions are stirred within his breast as he hears the village church-clock strike, and sees the field in which he used to work, the well-known road, and the old house. Scenes long forgotten rush in rapid succession before his mind's eye—the hay-making, the harvest, and all the various occasions of merriment which enliven rural life. Arrived at the home of his youth, he is received with open arms. The children play with his sword and his gun, and amuse themselves by putting on his soldier's clothes; while all the neighbours come to listen to the story of his adventures.

PAUL SCARRON.*

A LITTLE more than a hundred years ago, there was a grand carnival at Mans. It was not such a carnival as we see now-a-days. All was open and above board; there was no concealment. One of the madcaps of the hour was a youth of seven-and-twenty, who desired to be, however, quite disguised. He accordingly plastered himself with oil and then rolled himself in a feather-bed, which certainly gave him a very grotesque and absurd appearance. The whole carnival was taken by surprise at this original mask. People ran after him in crowds; at last, however, the boys became unpleasant in their conduct, and the young man and his three companions plunged into the Sarthe, which was full of ice. A few days later his three companions were dead, and he was attacked by hopeless paralysis of his limbs.

The hero of this scene was Paul Scarron, the most uproarious comic poet and writer of France, author of the "Comic Romance" and other productions of the same class.

Born in Paris in 1610, his father being a counsellor of parliament, Scarron would have had nearly a thousand a year, English money, if the annoyances of a step-mother had not driven him to commit the greatest follies. The above adventure was the last of a series of extravagancies and wild conduct that were leading him to ruin. At his father's death, he pleaded against his stepmother, amused his judges, and lost his case. He was now doomed to

obscurity and poverty, but he took it with extreme good humour. He took refuge in a house in the Marais, living in a chair, "having no motion left but that of his tongue and fingers." His deformity was increased by a fall from a horse. He began to live as a poet, and was patronised by nobility. The Duke de Longueville, Gaston d'Orleans, Madame de Hauteport, successively gave him employment. At last, he was presented to Anne of Austria, who offered him a place.

"Madam," said he, "the only post-I can fill, is that of *official sick man of the crown*."

The office was created and a pension attached to it.

"I promise to fulfil my functions admirably," he said.

He wrote away, however, and lampooned everybody. Unfortunately, he did not spare Cardinal Mazarin, who suppressed his pension. The princes, the rebels, and their coadjutors made it up to him in popularity. He asked in vain for the smallest living—a living, even without any parishioners. He could not obtain it.

One evening, a young lady of great beauty came to one of his evening parties. She was very poor. Daughter of a Calvinist, her existence had been a miserable one. Her youth had been spent in prisons and in huts. She became a Catholic to save herself; and when once converted, was abandoned by her patrons. She was driven forth to die without a hope. Scarron saw her, heard her story, and was much moved.

"You must go into a convent or marry," said he. "Do you want to be a nun? If so, I will write poetry until I can pay your dowry. Do you prefer a husband? I can offer you half my bread and the ugliest face in France."

Françoise d'Aubigné preferred the poor cripple to the convent. She married him; and never was there a tenderer wife. In the marriage-contract Scarron described her dowry as "four gold pieces, two fine eyes, a splendid figure, beautiful hands, and much wit."

"What a dowry!" said those who were present.

"It is immortality," said the poet; "the name of Madame Scarron will live for ever."

Nine years of devotion rewarded Scarron. In his house she became acquainted with Turenne, Mignard, and Levis. A widow at five-and-twenty, she had reputation, beauty, and every accomplishment; but she refused every offer.

Some years later, there took place in the chapel of Versailles, in presence of the Archbishop of Paris and many witnesses, a marriage ceremony, which reasons of state rendered it necessary should be kept secret. The contracting parties were Louis XIV., king of France, and Madame de Maintenon, the widow of Scarron, who from this hour governed France, and was generally esteemed to be as great an enemy of her early faith, as any of those who persecuted her when a child.

Scarron is recollected as a coarse rhymester. His widow holds the position of a queen of one of the greatest of French kings, legally, though not avowedly so.

* Some account of this writer was given in vol. iii. p. 51.

THE HYÆNA.

ALL the warmer parts of the eastern continent, from India to the Senegal, in Western Africa, are inhabited by great numbers of a singular animal, which appears in some respects to unite the characters of several distinct creatures. This is the common Striped Hyæna (*Hyæna Vulgaris*), a creature of the most repulsive aspect, and to the full as disgusting in his habits as in his external appearance. At first sight he has a good deal of the appearance of a large, and very ugly dog, and agrees so closely in some of his characters with the dogs, that Linnæus, the great Swedish naturalist, associated the hyæna with these animals (dogs, wolves, and foxes), under the name of *Canis Hyæna*. Later naturalists, however, have found distinctions which warrant the complete removal of the hyæna from this locality. These are derived partly from the structure and arrangement of the teeth, which somewhat approach those of the cats, and the tongue of the hyæna is furnished, like that of the larger cats (the lion, tiger, etc.), with a number of prickles, serving

to rasp the last particles of flesh from the bones of its prey. Unlike the cats, however, their claws are not retractile; and they possess beneath the tail a little pouch, like that which we meet with in the civet, and which, as in that animal, serves as a receptacle for an odorous secretion. The jaws and teeth of the hyæna are exceedingly solid and powerful; and the former are moved by muscles of prodigious strength, enabling the animal to crack bones which one would have thought beyond his power; so firmly does he bite, and so tenacious is he of his hold upon anything that he has once seized, that it is almost impossible to make him let it go. The Moors are said to avail themselves of their knowledge of this circumstance to capture the hyæna. They throw him the end of a long sack, made on purpose, and, when he has seized it, they may drag him wherever they please, without any fear of his loosing his hold. Cuvier tells us, also, that the Arabs employ the name of the hyæna as expressive of obstinacy; and the term "stiff-